1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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# Friend and Foe
## (1600-1928)

ON NEARLY ALL SIDES, the emptiness of a great sea surrounded the Tiwi; to the south, the only path which might have led to the outside was blocked by the hostility of their nearest mainland neighbors. The Tiwi retained this isolation until the very end of the last century, even though for several centuries outsiders had been seen by them; ships passed along the coast and occasionally strangers landed or were cast ashore. Changes in the life on the islands were few, however, until about 1900, when the Tiwi began their integration into the modern world.

## Hostility toward Outsiders (1600-1900)

Although in June of 1636 the sailor Pieter Pieterszoon in command of the ships *Cleen Amsterdam* and *Wesel* sailed along the western twenty miles of the north coast of Melville Island and named the region Van Diemensland,[1] our first real knowledge of the natives of Bathurst and Melville islands was gained by the Dutch expedition to this region in 1705 under Maarten van Delft. Men from his three ships spent about two weeks in surveying the north coast of Melville Island, the northern two-thirds of Apsley Strait between Bathurst and Melville islands, and the entire west coast of Bathurst Island.[2] They met natives several times and even allowed them aboard their ships.

Following this meeting between islanders and Europeans was a period during which the natives became extremely hostile to outsiders. Tiwi distrust of foreigners probably stemmed from these decades when the Portuguese on Timor were raiding Melville Island for slaves. Although very little has been

[1] Heeres 1899.
[2] *Ibid.* See also Mander Jones 1948 for some further data concerning Dutch knowledge of Melville Island.



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published concerning this era, such lack of information should not be taken as a refutation of such practices; the Portuguese archives remain today the only major block of libraries concerning a European colonial power important in the East Indies which has not been examined for material relevant to the history of Australia. From what little is known we may conclude that the Portuguese stopped capturing Tiwi as slaves about 1800.[8]

Even before the Portuguese made their last raids on Melville Island, another type of stranger, the "Malays" (or as we would call them today, the Indonesians), began to have encounters with the Tiwi. It was the search for the Chinese delicacy, the trepang or sea slug, which annually caused the Malays to sail past Melville Island eastward to Arnhem Land and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Neither the free-lance trepangers nor those sailing out of Macassar in the fleet of the Radaj of Boni wanted to stop at Melville Island, and they considered their misfortune to be great if their proas happened to be wrecked on its coast. They, like other Indonesians blown in to the homeland of the Tiwi, had little chance of surviving, for the Tiwi normally speared such poorly armed intruders and asked questions later.

The nineteenth century was an era of decreasing isolation for the Tiwi; during it, the outside world was knocking hard and often on their door. In 1802, a French expedition under Baudin mapped the southwestern tip of Bathurst Island, although its members apparently did not make a landing. In 1818, a British ship under P. P. King made a detailed coastal survey of Bathurst Island and all except the southeastern coast of Melville Island. Then on September 26, 1824, the British founded Fort Dundas on northwestern Melville Island, the first European settlement in the tropical part of Australia. The British and the Tiwi did not make friends. The imaginative commander of this outpost of empire, Major John Campbell, tried to capture a Tiwi and teach him sufficient English so that he could tell his tribesmen that the British would shoot them if they did not stop spearing the Englishmen and their buffalo imported from Timor. One Tiwi was captured but escaped within a fortnight under cover of darkness; meanwhile the British mourned for their doctor and storekeeper who had gotten in the way of well-aimed Tiwi spears. No native learned English. The British, disillusioned by their perpetual battle with the Tiwi and with tropical decay, abandoned Fort Dundas on March 31, 1829. Four and a half years of exposure to the British had affected the Tiwi little.

But the Tiwi were not to remain without external intruders. Shortly before 1844 a Dutch ship was wrecked on their coast. In 1858, an English vessel was lost on Melville Island. In 1869, the city now known as Darwin was founded and ships began to pass Bathurst or Melville islands almost daily. In the 1880's two ships, the *Afghan* and *Northern*, went aground off the

[8] The following statement from George Windsor Earl's *The Native Races of the Indian Archipelago: Papuans* (London: Hippolyte Baillière, 1853, p. 210,) is probably the most significant passage concerning the Portuguese relations with Tiwi: ". . . According to . . . the older inhabitants of Timor, Melville Island was only less a source of slavery than New Guinea, in proportion to its smaller extent of surface, at the period in which the slave-trade was encouraged or connived at by the European authorities . . . ."

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southern coast of Bathurst Island. In 1886, the Australian government tried to erect channel markers on the southern shore of Melville Island, whereupon the Tiwi immediately "salvaged" both cloth and iron from them. During June and July of the same year the ship *Jane Anderson* was stranded on the shoals of first Melville and then Bathurst Island. Also in 1886, two Malay proas were wrecked on the north coast of Melville Island. That year was a great one for looting.

Occasionally visitors came ashore on the islands. The Stokes' survey party landed in the late 1830's, but saw no natives. A government party crossed Melville Island in 1887; the Tiwi speared its leader. In 1895, a government tourist party went to look over the ruins of old Fort Dundas; they kept their eyes open and no one was injured. In 1897, Joe Cooper, a buffalo shooter, tried to make a living from the Melville Island buffalo; he was speared and retreated to Darwin.

Tiwi treatment of outsiders prior to 1900 had been to rob them, spear them, kill them. This is not, however, the picture painted by modern Tiwi when talking of their past. They claim that their ancestors greeted each new group of strangers with the cry: *"Pongki! Pongki!"* (meaning, "Peace! Peace!"). But then it should be noted that before 1900 many a Tiwi peacemaker carried a spear between his toes. Yet under these circumstances the Tiwi world view did alter. First there were those changes which came from an attempt to understand the new objects which were suddenly thrust into the Tiwi world: the trade knives and axes given by Dutch navigators, the matchlock guns used by the Malays and probably the Portuguese, the rice given to Tiwi by the surveyors under P. P. King, the Indonesian water buffalo introduced by the British at their short-lived settlement, the coconut palms the English left behind them, the cups and plates from shipwrecks in the 1880's, and the flour tossed overboard to lighten foundering vessels. The Tiwi cherished iron knives and axes, readily recognizing their greater efficiency. The Tiwi begged for them; they stole them; and, when a spar washed ashore bound round with iron bands, the natives burned away the wood and took the iron away to grind into axes. The matchlock gun, and even the later flintlock, could be coped with; when one saw the flash, one ducked flat, just in case the weapon worked, and then rushed in to impale the stranger with a spear. Rice was useless; it looked like the larvae of the termite, which was not good for anything anyway. Buffalo were to be killed; they kept wallowing in the best waterholes. Coconut palms were a great disappointment; they were bigger than the local cabbage palm, but when cut down, did not have the same succulent interior. Plates were too much bother to carry around, but cups were worth saving for a while. Flour could be used for white paint, but it was not as good as the best white pigment near at hand.

Other modifications took place in Tiwi life before 1900 as a result of action by outsiders. Probably the greatest of these alterations came as a result of slave raiding, or "black birding" as it is called in the South Seas. The Tiwi always kept their young women hidden from strangers, even if they were just visitors from other bands. The old men rarely left camp. Therefore, it was the

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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young males who went, or were sent, to try to satisfy their curiosity and to get iron from the Portuguese—and it was these young males who would make the best slaves in Timor. The anthropologist is left to wonder to what extent the removal of a disproportionate number of young men from a group might alter the form of the society. Is it possible that such happenings might be a factor which contributed to the dominance of the old Tiwi men and their near monopoly of wives? Could it be that the politics involved in wife trading were an indirect result of the Portuguese slave raiding? The possibility at least exists, and perhaps research in Portuguese archives will give us some clearer idea of how many young Tiwi men were carried off to Timor during this period. Present-day Tiwi, of course, remember nothing about it.

## The Beginning of Friendly Contact (1900-1928)

Today the Tiwi have been incorporated into the modern world as a part of the Australian nation, yet they came to understand outsiders, including Australians, through persons with many national backgrounds. Individuals who have helped to shape Tiwi views of non-Tiwi have been Indonesians, Filipinos, mainland natives from the Cobourg Peninsula, Frenchmen, and Japanese, as well as Australians from the southern parts of Australia.

The Tiwi were first drawn out of their hostile insularity by curiosity and the desire for iron, the same factors which had attracted them toward the Portuguese a century earlier. Iron looted from shipwrecks, channel markers, and the camps of casual visitors to the islands was not sufficient; the Tiwi desired a permanent avenue by which they could obtain the metal. The oldest Tiwi in the early 1950's stated that during the 1890's the Tiwi began to feel that opportunity was passing them by as they noted ship after ship sail in and out of Darwin; the islanders therefore came to the conclusion that they wanted a permanent European settlement in their midst, like the earlier Fort Dundas, for only in this way could they be guaranteed an uninterrupted source of iron.

About 1895, events began moving toward the establishment of a long-term European center on the islands. The vanguard of the movement was not European, however. In 1885, mother-of-pearl shell of commercial value was found on the bottom of Darwin Harbor. A few years of intensive diving by "Malay," "Manila," and Japanese pearlers soon worked out the Darwin beds, making it necessary for the growing fleet of pearling luggers to go further afield. They stripped the coast north of Darwin, moved on to the south coast of Melville Island, and finally began working the great shoals at the south end of Apsley Strait. Cautiously at first, the pearlers went ashore for water and firewood. Young Tiwi men became curious and paddled out to visit the luggers hove to just off the southern beaches in the neap tides. Aboard the luggers Tiwi youth had occasional meals, smoked tobacco, and were given iron tools. The Mandiimbula of southern Melville Island in particular began to look

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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forward to the periodic visits of the luggers, for they brought a new source of iron and trinkets.

Joe Cooper, the Australian buffalo hunter who had been chased out of the islands on his first attempt in 1897, returned again a few years later having first kidnaped two Tiwi women so that his mainland native helpers of the Yuwatja (Iwaidja) tribe near Cape Don could learn the language. When they had, he returned with a strong mainland detachment and well equipped with guns and horses. By 1900, European firearms were efficient weapons and a Tiwi spearman no longer could expect to kill a man armed with a modern rifle. Cooper is said never to have gone unarmed in his fifteen or so years (from about 1900-1916) as "King of Melville Island."[4]

In retrospect it is apparent that the agent through whom the Tiwi learned of the outside world was not Cooper, the white man, but his companions the Yuwatja (Iwaidja). They were more numerous and more approachable than Cooper, and several of them even had Tiwi wives whom they had captured. Tiwi accounts of these captives are noteworthy. It was the young Tiwi men hanging around Cooper's camp who suggested to the Yuwatja that they go and capture, by force of arms, Tiwi females who had recently become widows. The young men were thus performing their customary role of agents in widow remarriage—but in this case for foreign clients.

Cooper and his Yuwatja camped at various localities on Melville Island until about 1916 when their last base, at Paru opposite the site of the Mission, was abandoned and he and his mainlanders withdrew from the islands. It was this last camp at Paru that was made headquarters by Sir Baldwin Spencer, the well-known Australian anthropologist, when he visited the Tiwi in 1912.[5]

While Cooper was at Paru he was also visited by a young Alsatian priest, Father Francis Xavier Gsell, M. S. C., who was contemplating establishing a mission on adjacent Bathurst Island. Cooper tried to discourage Father Gsell by telling him that the Bathurst Islanders had guns and were dangerous; apparently Cooper did not want any missionaries around his rough-and-ready establishment. But Father Gsell did not scare easily; in June 1911 he returned and built his mission station on the southeast corner of Bathurst Island, where it still stands today. Cooper left Paru permanently about five years later.

By 1916, five years after its founding, the Mission had two French priests, several French nuns and some Filipino workmen, and a lugger which ran to and from Port Darwin once a month. It was not until the nuns came that the local Tiwi put any trust in the missionaries; they could not understand why a man who claimed to be as important as Father Gsell claimed to be did not have any wives. When the nuns arrived, the Tiwi were more ready to accept the priest as "a big man" and began to bring their women around.

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[4] Hardly a year goes by without a newspaper in Australia running a Sunday supplement article on Cooper's stay at Melville Island. Such stories often are titled "The King of Melville Island" and are normally extremely romanticized.

[5] Spencer 1914. Spencer's account of the Tiwi is remarkably inaccurate and confused. On this trip to the Northern Territory in 1912 he was without his usual collaborator, Gillen.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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Thus Cooper with his well-armed retinue of mainlanders had made the islands safe for white men and introduced a desire for white men's goods, particularly tobacco. His retirement from Melville Island left the newly established Mission on Bathurst Island as the only source of supply for these goods. After World War I, however, another influence began to grow in importance. Large numbers of Japanese pearling boats came and anchored off the coasts of southern and southeastern Melville Island, where they traded with the local bands—the Yeimpi and Mandiimbula. These bands got tobacco and European-type food (flour, rice, tea, sugar) from the Japanese in quantities which the Catholic missionaries could not afford to provide; all the Japanese asked in return was access to young native women. Men who controlled many women—as fathers, as husbands, or as brothers—were thus in a favorable position to profit by the traffic with the Japanese.

Whereas the demands made by the Japanese on the Yeimpi and Mandiimbula for women were 'quite straightforward and uncomplicated, Father Gsell's demands on the bands of south Bathurst Island were somewhat more complex in their consequences. Many aspects of the old pattern of Tiwi life had to be abandoned to make them into Christians. To the missionaries, polygamy was sinful and could not be part of the new Tiwi life. Prenatal and infant bestowal had to be abolished. Marriages should be between agemates and should be arranged freely and solely by the couple involved. Such changes were the crux of Father Gsell's program, and the story of how he went about it has run in many a Sunday supplement in the cities of Australia under the title "The Bishop With 150 Wives."[6] Father Gsell did not try to convert or drastically change the behavior of the older Tiwi; he believed that they were too set in their ways. Rather, he built toward a distant day by working among the younger generation. When infant girls became widows, he purchased them from their fathers. Men with young widowed daughters and those with spare young wives sold such girls for axes, flour, tobacco, cloth, and trinkets. Such "Blackies," as they became affectionately called,[7] lived in the convent with the French (and later Australian) sisters. When such a girl reached the age of about 18, she was asked to choose one of the young single men for her husband. For his part in this excellent deal which provided him with a wife long before he would get one under the old tribal system, the young man had only to promise that he would never take another wife. Such a wedding was not a Mass, for neither party was Catholic. However, the children born of this new union were baptized and reared as Catholics. Later, a few of the girls who had been sold to Father Gsell before they were ten went through confirmation as did their youthful fiances. The first nuptial Mass between two such Tiwi took place in 1928.

[6] Father Gsell became Bishop of Darwin in 1938. He lived on in retirement to 1958, having seen in his lifetime the fulfilment of his dream of the Tiwi as a Catholic tribe.

[7] The Tiwi today strongly resent being called "African," "Negro," or "nigger," but they do not seem to mind being called "Blacks." The term "Blackie" for a young female is in general use by Mission school girls for themselves; it is in no sense derogatory.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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# INTRODUCTION

MELVILLE ISLAND (Fig. 1), the research field of the 1954 National Geographic expedition, is, with the exception of Tasmania, the largest of the Australian islands. Eighty miles from east to west, and seventy from north to south, it rises barely five hundred feet above the sea. Its level surface is covered with a monotonous grey-green forest of eucalypts and acacias, whose monotony is broken only by the steep cliffs and sandy beaches of the coastline, the salt-water creeks which cut deeply into the northern coasts, and the almost impenetrable mangrove swamps that line those waterways.

Between Melville Island and the mainland are the swiftly running tideways, the reefs and shoals of the Clarence and Dundas Straits, tideways so dangerous that, before the installation of a series of flashing light-buoys, no ocean-going ship would attempt to navigate their broken waters in the darkness.

Abel Tasman, in 1644, was the first European to sail along the east, north, and west coasts of Melville Island and the adjacent Bathurst Island,[1] naming Cape Van Diemen and Van Diemen Gulf after the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. As Tasman's account of that journey was lost, we do not know whether he actually landed on the islands, or only saw them in the distance.

Sir Philip King circumnavigated the two islands in 1818 and in 1824 the British Government, both to prevent the French from settling along the northern coasts of Australia and to protect British commerce from the rapidly expanding Dutch trade, established a military post at Fort Dundas, on the Apsley Straits. After five unhappy years the authorities moved the garrison to Port Essington, on the Coburg Peninsula, on the mainland, but not before both Sir Gordon Bremer (12th Nov. 1824) and Major Campbell (1834, pp. 135–60) had made some excellent observations on aboriginal graves, burial poles, bark paintings and canoes.

In the early days of this century, a buffalo hunter, Joe C. Cooper, having gained the confidence of the warlike people of Melville Island, known as the Tiwi tribe, established a camp near Cockle Point (Fig. 1) on the south-western corner of Melville Island. There he earned a living shooting buffaloes for their hides, buffaloes whose forbears had escaped from the settlement at Fort Dundas.

[1] Melville and Bathurst Islands, separated by the narrow Apsley Straits, are both a geographic and cultural unit.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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After Cooper had established himself a number of investigators, Brown in 1905, Klaatsch in 1906, Spencer and Basedow in 1911, and Fry in 1913, paid short visits to the Islands, and recorded valuable information on the aborigines and their ceremonial life.

Following their departure no research work was carried out until 1929, when Hart spent a year or more among the aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands. But though Hart must have collected a great deal of data among the almost untouched aborigines of those times, he has published only two short papers on their customs. (Hart, 1930, pp. 167–80; pp. 280–290.)

Again there was a lag in time, except for a short paper by Harney and Elkin (1942, pp. 228–34), until Pilling in 1953, stationed at the Bathurst Island Sacred Heart Mission, spent over a year studying aboriginal life and social organization.[8]

In 1954 the National Geographic Society's expedition established a camp at Snake Bay on the north coast of Melville Island (Fig. 1), and for six months studied the ethnology, the geology and the ornithology of the area. Although the National Geographic Society of America provided the bulk of the funds, Mr. John Bonython of Adelaide financed the geological survey of Melville and Bathurst Islands.

The expedition party of American and Australian scientists was an excellent example of international co-operation. It was made up of Miss Jane Goodale, ethnologist, and Dr. Carleton Coon, Professor of Anthropology, both from the University of Pennsylvania; Mr. David Parsons, ornithologist from Yale University; Mr. Brian Daily, geologist from the University of Adelaide; Mr. William E. Harney, guide, Mr. George Joy, cook, and myself, as leader and ethnologist.

Our combined research covered a wide field. Miss Goodale concentrated on the place of the women and children in the community, Mr. Parsons collected and studied the birds of the island, Mr. Daily, by an examination of the outcropping rocks, established the geological history of Melville and Bathurst Islands, whilst I, apart from the duties of leadership, concentrated on the art, myth, and particularly the burial ceremonies.

During their visit, Dr. Carleton Coon and his wife made a special study of the physical characteristics of the aborigines.

I chose Melville Island as a centre of research, because it was evident from the scattered writings of Basedow, Fry, Hart, Harney, Spencer and

[8] The Sacred Heart Mission was established on Bathurst Island, opposite Cooper's camp, during 1911.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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101 121 others that the culture of the Melville and Bathurst Islanders was markedly different from that of the adjacent mainland people.

It seemed evident, also, that this difference in the cultures was the result 101 of isolation for which two possible factors were responsible: (a) the natural 131 water barrier created by the Dundas and Clarence Straits (Fig. 1), and (b) 182 the inability of the Tiwi to cross those swift and dangerous tideways in their 501 primitive canoes. These canoes consisted of no more than a folded sheet of eucalyptus bark, sewn together at either end with strips of lawyer vine, caulked with mud, and strengthened at the gunwales with light saplings. The old men of Melville Island assured me that, before Cooper brought across the mainland wooden canoe (1905) bark canoes were their only means of water transport.

174 501 I am convinced, from my personal experience with similar canoes in north-eastern Arnhem Land, and my sea journeys across the Dundas and Clarence Straits, that the bark canoes of the Tiwi were far too weak to have withstood the buffetings of those turbulent waters. Nor would it have been possible for the mainlanders to have made the journey before they acquired [175] [177] the wooden canoes from the Malays, which reliable historical records indicate was not before the end of the eighteenth century.[8] Previous to that time, these people would have had only a bark canoe similar to that used by the Melville and Bathurst Islanders. It would be some time, too, after the aborigines acquired their new wooden craft, before they would be sufficiently skilled to make that perilous journey to Melville Island, even [609] had they wished to do so. Further, the Tiwi were notably unfriendly and killed anyone who visited their shores. It is likely, then, that during the historically short time that the aborigines of the mainland possessed the wooden canoe, their visits would have had little, if any, effect on the culture of the Tiwi.

177 114 From this evidence, it appears certain that for an unknown, and possibly a lengthy period, the aborigines of the Tiwi tribe have been almost, if not completely, isolated from outside cultural influences.

This supposition is supported by Hart (1930, p. 170), who states that, "It was impossible, in fact, quite unnecessary, for them (the Tiwi) to visit the mainland in their bark canoes, . . . Until the advent of white men, the Melville Islanders were not aware that any other people existed but themselves."

Foelsche (1882, p. 17), however, states that "The Melville Islanders occasionally visited the mainland for the purpose of stealing lubras (women),

[8] Mountford, 1956, p. 410.

3: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 OI20 Tiwi OI20

# THE TIWI OF MELVILLE AND BATHURST ISLANDS

By C. W. M. HART[1]

MELVILLE and Bathurst Islands lie off the north coast of Australia some fifty to eighty miles north-east of Port Darwin. They are divided from the mainland by Dundas Straits, which at their narrowest part are about twenty-five miles wide, this being the approximate distance between the Vernon Group and Cape Gambier on Melville Island. The latter is the largest island in the Commonwealth of Australia with the exception of Tasmania, being some seventy miles long by forty miles wide, and containing about one and a half million acres. Bathurst Island is about one-third of that size, and is separated from its neighbour by Apsley Strait, which varies in width from about a quarter of a mile opposite the mission to two or three miles below Fort Dundas.

The first settlement in Northern Australia was made on Melville Island at a spot named Fort Dundas in Apsley Strait. It was founded on the 26th September, 1824, by Captain Gordon Bremer, R.N., of H.M.S. *Tamar*, who had been specially sent from Sydney for the purpose. Chiefly owing to difficulties with the natives, the settlement was abandoned on 31st March, 1829, when the convicts, troops, stores, etc., were transferred to Fort Wellington, on the Coburg Peninsula of the mainland. To-day a few piles of stones and a dilapidated ramparted ditch are all that is to be seen of this outpost of empire.

From 1829 until 1911, when the Sacred Heart Mission Station was established on Bathurst Island, no permanent settlement was made on either of these islands, though they were visited from time to time, and various buffalo shooters and timber-getters resided there for varying periods, the best-known of them, R. J. Cooper, having lived on Melville (where his house still stands) from 1894 until 1914. At present Bathurst Island is a native reserve with the missionaries as protectors, and hence

[1] This paper contains some of the results of research carried out as Science Research Scholar of the University of Sydney and with the aid of a grant from the Australian National Research Council.

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5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20



the advent of the buffalo-hunters, few white men had visited the islands since the early days of the naval settlement at Fort Dundas, established by Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, but abandoned four years later. Malays and Japanese pearlers have been in the habit of taking in water from either of the islands and have frequently come into disastrous conflict with the natives. It is perhaps also on account of their isolation from civilization that I found the blacks comparatively free from any serious disease. Apart from the various minor ailments such as traumatic lesions and their after-effects, cataracts and keratitis, a few congenital deformities and such like, only a few cases of tertiary syphilis came under my notice.

A young gin was suffering from a disease of the hip, apparently chronic, but she was too timid to permit me to make an examination. They are on the whole a healthy, sturdy people of moderate stature, with a good muscular development and a square, big thorax. The characteristics are Australoid and yet they present certain insular peculiarities.

### *The Head.*

The forehead is low, with a marked supraorbital development; the face somewhat depressed and the lower jaw strong. The eyes are sunken and the nose is small. The wavy black hair of some of the males was worked up into numerous small, cylindrical, pendant masses with clay and ochre.[1] This, so far as I could ascertain, designated mourning. Others had besmeared their hair with ochre. The hairs on the upper lip are pulled out. The growth of the beard of the men varies, but is, on an average, good.

The natives of either island do not practise the knocking out of one or two incisors as they do on the mainland. Major Campbell,[2] however, reports having observed the custom on Melville Island.

The face is painted symmetrically with differently coloured ochres, charcoal, and pipeclay, in various degrees of complexity (Fig. 1). A few of the simpler designs might be described briefly:—*Case* (1): The whole surface of the face blackened with charcoal. *Case* (2): The nose red and the rest of the face charcoal-black. *Case* (3): Face (including the shaven upper lip and upper part of chin) charcoal-

[1] *Cf.* J. MacGillivray, *Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* London, 1852, vol. ii, p. 13: "The characteristic mode of dressing the hair among the Torres Strait Islanders is to have it twisted up into long pipe-like ringlets, and wigs in imitation of this are also worn"; and again, "at Cape York I have at times for a week together seen all the men and lads with the hair twisted into little strands well daubed over with red ochre and turtle fat."

Also P. P. King, *Survey of the Intertropical Coasts of Australia*, 1837, vol. i, p. 114: "The men were more muscular and better formed than any we have before seen, they were daubed over with a yellow pigment which was the colour of the neighbouring cliff (Luxmore Head on Melville Island); their hair was long and curly and appeared to be clotted with a whitish paint."

[2] *Journ. Geogr. Society*, London, 1834, vol. iv, p. 153. *Cf.* also H. Klaatsch: *Rep. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1907, vol. xi, p. 501.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20



demands it; but usually, when on a simple turtle or dugong hunting expedition, two persons only occupy places in the craft, one near the bow and another near the stern (*vide* Plate X, Figs. 1 and 2). The boatmen, while propelling the craft, squat with their buttocks resting upon the heels and with their knees pressed against the sides. The weight of their body being thus well within the boat, its stability is thereby considerably increased.

*Paddles.*—Propulsion is effected by means of paddles which are made of hard wood. They have a single well-shaped blade and a rounded handle (*vide* Plate XII, Fig. 2). The edges of the blade are parallel or taper slightly towards the end, which is square or rounded. Apart from the marks left by the tomahawk used in its making, the implement is without ornamentation. In one case only, a circular collar was carved around the handle, immediately above the sloping shoulder of the blade. The longest paddle noted measured 167 centimetres in length, its blade 80; the shortest was 115 centimetres in length and its blade 45. The width of the blades ranges from 7 to 9 centimetres. Both hands clasp the paddle, which is dipped alternately on one side or the other as the occasion and the steering require it.

*Balers.*—Water that accumulates in the canoe, either by leakage or overwash in a rough sea, is removed by means of a baler which is made out of the melon shell[1] (*Melo diadema*). The columella of the shell is carefully cut away, leaving only the large body-whorl, which is used as a scoop (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 3 and 4). The outer surface of the shell is painted with red and yellow ochre in large cross pattern, with a fine cross shading.

*Dug-outs.*—The dug-out canoes to which I have elsewhere referred[2] have, in all probability, been introduced by Malays from whom the natives obtain them by barter. Dr. Walter Roth has also proved that the dug-outs met with along the coast of Queensland are of Papuan origin. The form observed in Apsley Strait is without outrigger and hollowed out of a single tree trunk. The bow and stern are raised (*vide* Plate X, Fig. 2).

### *Corrobborees.*

As with all primitive folk, song and dance constitute the ultimate stage of any social intercourse or festivity. The islanders are even more ready than their brothers on the mainland to resort to this means of entertainment. It thus happened that, wherever we came into contact with the blacks and presented them with divers small articles, a corrobboree was immediately inaugurated; even though the encounter happened to occur in the middle of the day. Corrobborees on the

[1] *Cf. Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* vol. ii, p. 17: "the baler (a melon shell) is in constant requisition."

[2] *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 53. Among others, note that Major Campbell says of the Port Essington natives that "such of the canoes as I saw were hollowed from the trunks of trees, like those of the Malays and were probably either left by these people or stolen from them," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, vol. iv, 1834, p. 170.